

New Charges Against Lt. Cooke

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The Air Force broadened its case against one of its Titan missile launch officers and charged him yesterday with contacting Soviet officials 13 times in the past year and passing military information to unauthorized persons.

One of those allegedly given information was not a Soviet official, defense sources said.

The new charges against 2nd Lt. Christopher Cooke, 25, of Richmond, means that, if convicted, he could face imprisonment at hard labor for up to 76 years.

A grand jury-like Air Force hearing to determine whether there is enough evidence against Cooke to court-martial him is to resume today at Andrews Air Force Base. The hearing opened Tuesday.

Cooke was charged May 28 with visiting the Soviet Embassy

here three times between December and May. He was deputy commander of a four-man Titan II missile complex at McConnell Air Force Base, Kan.

The new charges, resulting from an Air Force investigation, accused Cooke of contacting Soviet Embassy officials 10 additional times since June, 1980, without reporting the contacts to his superiors.

Defense sources said some of those alleged contacts involved more visits to the embassy. Whether other contacts were in person outside the embassy or by telephone is not known.

Additionally, Cooke was charged with passing defense information five times "to a person or persons not authorized access to such information." The sources said some of that information allegedly was passed in a letter to someone other than a Soviet official.